



**LD 1799, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Review the  
Progressive Treatment Program and Processes by Which a Person May Be  
Involuntarily Admitted to a Psychiatric Hospital or Receive Court-ordered Community  
Treatment**

**Testimony in Support  
May 9, 2025**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN. I am here today speaking in support of this bill on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with more than 10,000 employees statewide.

The progressive treatment program (PTP) was initially established during the 122nd Legislature pursuant to P.L. 2005, Ch. 519, pt. BBBB (effective July 1, 2006). In 2010 the program became fully operational. The law establishes a framework for court ordered treatment - following a psychiatric examination and a court proceeding, with attorney representation and full due process, a judge may order individuals with severe mental illnesses who meet specific criteria to follow a treatment plan for living in the community where community services are available

Admission to the PTP is contingent upon the following conditions: the patient suffers from a severe and persistent mental illness; the patient poses a likelihood of serious harm; the patient has the benefit of a suitable individualized treatment plan; licensed and qualified providers are available to support the plan; the patient is unlikely to follow the plan voluntarily; court-ordered compliance will help protect the patient from interruptions in treatment, relapses or deterioration of mental health; and compliance will enable the patient to survive more safely in a community setting without posing a likelihood of serious harm.

Resolve 2021, Ch. 60 (introduced as LD 869) instructed the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to convene a stakeholder group to review the Progressive Treatment Program (PTP) as well as processes by which a person may be involuntarily admitted to a psychiatric hospital or receive court-ordered community treatment.

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Inland Hospital  
Maine Coast Hospital  
Mayo Hospital  
Mercy Hospital  
Northern Light Health Foundation  
Northern Light Pharmacy  
Sebasticook Valley Hospital

Northern Light Acadia Hospital actively participated with the stakeholder group. In general, Northern Light Acadia Hospital has 10 PTP patients in their care.

The group worked collaboratively to explore challenges with the PTP program and made the following recommendations.

1. Establish a PTP Monitor under the auspices of DHHS
2. Establish a new fund, administered by DHHS, to reimburse the legal costs of private entities for PTP initiation and maintenance
3. Establish a new mechanism within the PTP statute to maintain an existing PTP during an involuntary hospitalization
4. Establish a timeframe under which PTP participants could be involuntarily hospitalized under green paper criteria
5. Reconcile involuntary transport to hospitals by Law Enforcement by using green paper criteria rather than protective custody criteria
6. Make DHHS Commissioner the moving party in all PTP applications, requiring AAG representation
7. Allow for medication over objection if under green paper and medication compliance is listed on PTP
8. Allow for expedited treatment over objection Court filings
9. Clarify that PTP plans can be renewed on an annual basis when appropriate

The report was provided to the Health and Human Services Committee in February of 2022, a period of time when healthcare was focused on the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not clear to us what recommendations have moved forward, and if so what recommendations have statewide impact or smaller regional partners working on implementation, or no action at all. We do know that the PTP program is important, and warrants reconvening the stakeholders to evaluate our progress, program challenges and update our recommendations to reflect the needs of patients and providers today.

This resolve directs the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to convene a stakeholder group of interested parties to review the entire process related to a progressive treatment program and to review for efficiency and effectiveness the processes by which a person may be involuntarily admitted to a psychiatric hospital or receive court-ordered community treatment. The commissioner is required to submit a report with recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services no later than December 3, 2025. The committee is authorized to report out legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature related to the recommendations in the report.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of this legislation.